



Dawda A. Jallow
 Minister of Justice and Attorney General
 Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice
 Marina Parade
 Banjul
 The Gambia

11 May 2022

Dear Honourable Minister Jallow,

THE TRRC RECOMMENDATIONS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY ACCOUNTABILITY

When the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) was launched in 2018, Gambians and the international community celebrated the government's decision to establish a record of the crimes and abuses of the Yahya Jammeh period. The TRRC provided an opportunity for two hundred and twenty-nine victims of Jammeh's government to be heard, as well as taking testimony from former government insiders such as ministers, police and intelligence chiefs, and members of the "Junglers" hit squad. The TRRC hearings, broadcast on radio and television with interpretation into local languages, had a profound impact on Gambian society. Last year, we also welcomed the TRRC recommendations, which called for prosecutions of the crimes committed, as an encouraging first step to ensure that survivors and victims' families finally get justice and reparations. We applauded the government's decision to release the report in a public ceremony on 24 December and to make the entire report immediately available on-line.

As the government is working on finalising in the coming weeks the white paper that will provide the roadmap for the implementation of the TRRC recommendations, we would like to raise some of our hopes and concerns. First of all, we hope that the process followed by your administration to produce this document is inclusive and involves the victims of abuses during Jammeh's government, as well as civil society. We welcome the national discussion on the TRRC report this week between your department, some civil society and victim-led organisations as an important and encouraging step to ensure inclusion of victims in the process. Victims and affected communities should be consulted and should be able to contribute to the decision-making process, the prioritization and the designing of measures with regards to matters that concern them. In this spirit, we hope you will go beyond the TRRC recommendations and consider the demands of the victims who did not participate in the TRRC hearings, namely regarding sexual and gender-based violence.

We also urge you to ensure that combating impunity is an essential part of the government's roadmap. Victims have a right to receive truth, justice and reparations. The TRRC found that crimes against humanity had been committed and that Yahya Jammeh and 69 other named perpetrators were responsible for 44 specific crimes, including murder, torture, rape and sexual violence, enforced disappearance, and called for their prosecution. The government should thus ensure that enough resources are dedicated so that prompt, thorough and impartial investigations are conducted, and alleged perpetrators are prosecuted in fair trials within a reasonable time and before an independent and impartial tribunal with no recourse to the death penalty.

In addition, as recommended by the TRRC, legislation must be adopted or modified accordingly to avoid a repetition of the crimes committed and combat impunity.

Finally, transparency in this whole process is primordial. We expect that the government will continue to communicate in a transparent, regular and clear way about the evolution of the white paper and publish it by 25 May, so that every Gambian is aware of the government's plan to provide justice and reparations to the victims, and civil society can assist in the implementation and its monitoring.

The publication of the white paper coincides with the first months of President Barrow's second administration. For our organizations, the content of the white paper will be an indicator of the government's real commitment to justice and accountability.

Co-signatories:

- Amnesty International
- African Network against Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances
- Female Lawyers Association-Gambia
- The Gender Platform
- Gambia Press Union
- Human Rights Watch
- Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa
- International Commission of Jurists
- Solo Sandeng Foundation
- The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in The Gambia
- Think Young Women
- The Toufah Foundation
- Trial International
- Gambia Center for Victims of Human Rights Violations
- Women's Association for Victims' Empowerment
- Women in Liberation and Leadership

Cc:

- President Adama Barrow
- Dr. Lamin J. Sise, Chairperson of the TRRC